

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS PUBLICATION BY MICHIGAN JUDICIAL INSTITUTE TO BE BASIS FOR NATIONAL CURRICULUM

LANSING, MI, March 12, 2004 – A publication by the Michigan Judicial Institute (MJi) will be used as the basis for a model national curriculum and benchbook on crime victims' rights, the Michigan Supreme Court announced today.

MJi is a division of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the Supreme Court's administrative arm. A national consortium, including the National Center for State Courts, American Probation and Parole Association, Justice Solutions Inc., American Judges Association, National Association for Court Management, and the National Association of State Judicial Educators, is developing the national curriculum and benchbook, to be paid for with federal dollars. The consortium will use MJi's Crime Victim Rights Manual as a model for the national benchbook and curriculum. The manual is authored by Tobin Miller, Program and Publications Administrator for MJi. The consortium has also asked Miller to serve on the project's advisory committee.

In its executive summary of the national project, the consortium noted that MJi's publication "is the only known benchbook on general victims' rights."

Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan said she is "extremely pleased with this great compliment to the work of Mr. Miller, the MJi, and the Michigan judiciary. It is truly an honor for Michigan to provide the basis for this model curriculum, which will be used by courts throughout the country."

Corrigan added that "the mere fact that Michigan is the only one of 50 states to have a victims' rights benchbook is a testament to how progressive our state is in this regard."

The MJi benchbook, which has been in use in Michigan since September 2001, provides information on Michigan's Crime Victim's Rights Act and related issues, such as victim trauma, media issues, and victim confidentiality. The benchbook is used by judges, court staff, prosecuting attorneys, probation officers, victims rights advocates, and others.

Miller said that the national project's goals "are to educate judges and court staff about laws affecting crime victims' rights and the impact crime has on victims and their families." He

said the project is also aimed at “helping courts comply with victims’ rights laws while not infringing on the rights of the accused.”

The national project will be implemented in three phases over four years; the resulting curriculum will be used in a pilot project involving six states. The project’s ultimate goal is to make the curriculum, benchbook, and a compendium of “promising practices” available nationwide.

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